

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1.-39. (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended) A method for reconfiguring tissue, the method comprising:

providing an apparatus comprising:

a shaft having a distal end and a proximal end and adapted to provide a suction therethrough;

a flexible tube mounted on the shaft and disposed parallel to the shaft;

two effector mechanisms movably mounted on the distal end of the shaft, each effector mechanism comprising at least one suction element in communication with the shaft suction for gripping tissue, the two effector mechanisms being configured to capture gripped tissue against an outer surface of the flexible tube, wherein the distal end of the shaft comprises a longitudinal axis, wherein the two effector mechanisms are pivotally mounted on the shaft along a pivot axis extending parallel to the longitudinal axis of the shaft and a longitudinal axis of the flexible tube, wherein the two effector mechanisms are each configured to move between (i) a closed position wherein the two effector mechanisms fold concentrically about a distal end of the flexible tube, and (ii) an open position wherein the two effector mechanisms are disposed over the flexible tube, and wherein at least one suction element comprises a suction pod for drawing tissue into engagement with

the effector mechanism and for maintaining the tissue in such engagement while suction is maintained;

at least one actuating mechanism in communication with the proximal end of the shaft; and

at least one connection mechanism connecting the at least one actuating mechanism to the two effector mechanisms, whereby a user may utilize the at least one actuating mechanism to actuate the two effector mechanisms and the suction therethrough so as to reconfigure tissue;

positioning the two effector mechanisms in a closed position;

advancing the apparatus so that the distal end of the shaft is positioned adjacent tissue to be reconfigured;

positioning the two effector mechanisms in an open position;

engaging tissue proximate the distal end of the shaft and against the two effector mechanisms; and

~~positioning the two effector mechanisms in a closed position and~~

applying suction to the effector mechanisms so as to reconfigure the tissue and capture the tissue against the flexible tube; and

positioning the two effector mechanisms in a closed position.

41. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 40 wherein the method comprises an additional step of securing the tissue in the reconfigured condition.

42. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 40 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus.

43. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 42 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus wrapped by stomach tissue.

44.-45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 42 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus.

47. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 46 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus wrapped by stomach tissue.

48. (Previously Presented) A method for reconfiguring tissue, the method comprising:

providing an apparatus comprising:

a shaft having a distal end and a proximal end;
a plurality of effector mechanisms mounted to the distal end of the shaft, each effector mechanism comprising at least one gripping element for gripping tissue, the plurality of effector mechanisms being configured to capture gripped tissue against the shaft, wherein the distal end of the shaft exhibits

a longitudinal axis, wherein the plurality of effector mechanisms extend parallel to the longitudinal axis of the distal end of the shaft, wherein the plurality of effector mechanisms are configured to move between (i) a first position wherein the plurality of effector mechanisms collectively form a tubular configuration, and (ii) a second position wherein the plurality of effector mechanisms collectively form a non-tubular configuration, and wherein the at least one gripping element comprises a suction pod for drawing tissue against the effector mechanism and for maintaining the tissue in such engagement while suction is maintained;

at least one actuating mechanism mounted in the proximal end of the shaft; and

at least one connection mechanism connecting the at least one actuating mechanism to the plurality of effector mechanisms, whereby a user may utilize the at least one actuating mechanism to actuate the plurality of effector mechanisms so as to reconfigure tissue;

positioning the effector mechanisms in the first position;

advancing the apparatus so that said distal end of said shaft is positioned adjacent tissue to be reconfigured;

applying a suction to the suction pods of the actuator end of the shaft and thereby to the suction pods of the effector mechanisms, thereby gripping tissue against the distal end of the shaft and against the effector mechanisms; and

positioning the effector mechanisms in the second position so as to reconfigure the gripped tissue and capture the tissue against the shaft.

49. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 48 comprising the additional step of securing the tissue in the reconfigured condition.

50. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 48 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus.

51. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 50 wherein the tissue comprises stomach tissue reconfigured into a neoesophagus wrapped by stomach tissue.

52 - 54. (Canceled)